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Doctor's license in jeopardy after death of abortion patient in San Gabriel

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Attorneys for the California Medical Board today asked a judge to suspend the license of an obstetrician-gynecologist involved in the death of a 30-year-old woman seeking an abortion at a San Gabriel clinic.

Dr. Andrew Rutland, 66, "committed repeated negligent acts in his care and treatment" of the woman, who died Aug. 3 after being given drugs by Rutland in preparation for a second-

trimester abortion.

Rutland did not have the proper equipment or personnel in case of an emergency, Deputy Atty. Gen. Douglas Lee told Administrative Law Judge, James Ahler during a hearing in San Diego.

At the time of the death, Rutland was on five years' probation by the medical board after the return of his license in 2007. In 2002, amid an investigation into the death of an infant, he voluntarily surrendered his license, according to state records.

Rutland, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel, has an office in Anaheim and has practiced at clinics in San Gabriel and Chula Vista, Calif., according to testimony. The Chula Vista clinic specialized in abortions.

Rutland's attorney, Peter Osinoff, told Ahler that suspending his client's license would be a "drastic and inappropriate" move and that the death of the woman, while tragic, was not Rutland's fault. "It is not the kind of event [from which] you can conclude he's a danger to the public," Osinoff said.

But Lee said that Rutland has a pattern of dishonesty and corruption and that when paramedics arrived at the San Gabriel clinic, they found no one attempting to help the patient, identified as Ying Chen, who spoke only Chinese.

Among other documents, the attorney general's office submitted a review by a professor at the UC San Diego medical school heavily criticizing Rutland. Osinoff asked Ahler to consider the 100 abortions that Rutland has performed without complications in the last two years.

Ahler said he would issue his ruling by the close of business.

-- Tony Perry in San Diego

Photo: Dr. Andrew Rutland during a hearing in San Diego. Credit: Tony Perry / Los Angeles Times

Comments

